

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GUATEM 00194 111934Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 ACDA-07 AID-05 EB-07 IGA-02
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 L-03 MC-02 OMB-01 SS-15 SP-02
TRSE-00 IO-13 /091 W
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R 111831Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4419
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
USCINCSO
AMCONSUL BELIZE
SECDEF WASHDC
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 0194

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: GT BH MASS PBOR
SUBJECT: GOG ACQUISITION OF C-47'S

REF: 75 GUATEMALA 4462

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY HAS LEARNED THAT GOG PLANS TO PURCHASE THREE C-47 TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT FROM US THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS. IN VIEW CONTINUING NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN GUATEMALA AND GREAT BRITAIN TO RESOLVE BELIZE PROBLEM AND REDUCED LEVEL OF TENSIONS AT THIS TIME, EMBASSY DOES NOT OBJECT TO PURCHASE. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY HAS LEARNED THAT GOG INTENDS TO PURCHASE THREE C-47 AIRCRAFT THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS, BUT DOES NOT KNOW WHETHER AIRCRAFT ARE DESTINED FOR GUATEMALAN AIR FORCE, COMMERCIAL AIRLINE AVIATECA, OR SOME OTHER USE. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT, IN VIEW SMALL SIZE OF STRAIGHT COMMERCIAL TRANSACTION, USG APPROVAL FOR SALE AND EXPORT OF AIRCRAFT MAY NOT BE NECESSARY. HOWEVER, CONSIDERING
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IMPORTANCE OF QUESTION ONLY 18 MONTHS AGO (REFTEL) AND POSSIBLE DEPARTMENT WISH TO INFORM HMG, EMBASSY BELIEVES IT APPROPRIATE TO REVIEW QUESTION AND EXPLAIN ITS REASONS FOR NO LONGER OBJECTING TO SALE OF THESE AMERICAN AIRCRAFT TO GOG.

3. IN 1974, UNDER MAP, GUATEMALA ORDERED 11 USED C-47

AIRCRAFT. AFTER INITIALLY FAVORING APPROVAL FOR THIS PURCHASE, THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDED IN AUGUST 1975 THAT US DELAY ANY RESPONSE TO GOG REQUEST BECAUSE OF THE VOLATILITY OF BELIZE SITUATION. THERE WAS CONCERN THAT GUATEMALA MIGHT REACT TO AN UNFAVORABLE RESOLUTION ON BELIZE AT THEN UPCOMING UNGA SESSION BY INITIATING MILITARY ACTION, AND EMBASSY DID NOT WANT US TO BE SEEN AS AGREEING TO SELL MILITARY TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT AT SUCH A TIME. IT WAS PLANNED TO REVIEW THIS DECISION FOLLOWING END OF UNGA SESSION.

4. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THIS DELAY IN AGREEING TO SALE, GOG CANCELLED ORDER AND PROCEEDED TO PURCHASE 10 ARAVA TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT FROM ISRAEL.

5. NOW AGAIN THE GOG WISHES TO PURCHASE SOME C-47'S AND THE EMBASSY NO LONGER OBJECTS. PROSPECTS FOR AN OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES ARE CONSIDERABLY REDUCED FROM THE SITUATION OF AUGUST 1975. A SECOND UNGA RESOLUTION HAS BEEN PASSED AND RECEIVED IN GUATEMALA IN LOW-KEY, ALMOST HO-HUM FASHION. THERE IS NOW VERY LITTLE OF THE EMOTION ON THIS QUESTION THAT THEN APPEARED TO BE BUILDING. MOREOVER, NEGOTIATIONS ARE CONTINUING (EVEN IF HEADED TO AN EVENTUAL STALEMATE OVER THE QUESTION OF A TERRITORIAL CESSION). WHILE NONE OF THIS NECESSARILY MEANS THAT AN ULTIMATE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM IS ANY CLOSER THAN IT WAS IN AUGUST 1975 THE CONSIDERABLY REDUCED LEVEL OF TENSIONS DOES REMOVE THE IMMEDIATE JUSTIFICATION FOR OBJECTING TO GOG PURCHASE OF THE C-47 AIRCRAFT.
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6. TO TRY TO BLOCK THIS PURCHASE (IF INDEED DEPARTMENT IS LEGALLY ABLE TO DO SO) WOULD HAVE LITTLE EFFECT ON TRANSPORT CAPACITY OF GAF AND EVEN LESS EFFECT ON GOG CAPABILITY FOR TYPE OF UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE THEY WOULD PROBABLY USE IF HOSTILITIES DEVELOPED OVER BELIZE. MOREOVER, IT WOULD FURTHER UNDERMINE ALREADY GREATLY REDUCED INFLUENCE OF MILGP AND NEGATIVELY AFFECT WHOLE CLIMATE OF US-GUATEMALAN RELATIONS.

7. CONSEQUENTLY, EMBASSY BELIEVES USG SHOULD CONTINUE ITS PRESENT POLICY OF TRYING WHENEVER POSSIBLE TO FILL ITS TRADITIONAL ROLE AS PRINCIPAL SUPPLIER OF DEFENSE EQUIPMENT AND SPARE PARTS TO GOG AND THEREFORE SHOULD ALLOW TRANSACTION TO PROCEED WITHOUT ANY USG INTERFERENCE.
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